

## Section 3 Personnel Development

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### 1-301 General

Personnel development is essential for successfully implementing Caltrans' strategic plan, goals, and objectives. Moreover, most construction employees want to learn new job skills. A comprehensive training and development program helps to recruit and retain new construction staff. It is in the best interests of Caltrans to train staff early in their careers, reinforce that training as time passes, and update staff job skills as changes in policy and technology affect the way Caltrans conducts business and serves its stakeholders.

Base staff development needs on Caltrans' fundamental goals and objectives. Design each training and development activity to produce construction personnel who are prepared to perform their essential job duties.

### 1-301 General

### 1-302 District Role

District construction will do the following:

- Identify training needs based on the following:
  1. The employee's current knowledge and skills
  2. Additional job skills necessary for the employee's success in the current job assignment
  3. Skills the employee will need for future job assignments
- Include training and development planning in each employee's yearly individual development plan.
- Provide each employee with adequate training and development opportunities that will facilitate the implementation of the employee's training and development plan.
- For each construction employee, maintain a historic record of completed training and development sufficient to enable a supervisor to evaluate the employee's construction knowledge and skill level.

### 1-302 District Role

### 1-303 Supervisor Role

Supervisors will do the following:

- Ensure that each employee under their direct supervision is capable of performing the assigned duties.
- Periodically review subordinates' qualifications and use that information when making decisions about new job assignments.

### 1-303 Supervisor Role

- When evaluating staffing needs and planning job assignments, carefully consider cross-training opportunities for all staff, provided collective bargaining agreements and memorandums of understanding allow such opportunities. A well cross-trained staff has the following abilities:
  1. More flexibility in completing a job
  2. More ability to collaborate
  3. Stronger ability to adjust to changing project conditions
- Establish a succession plan, indicating who will back up the supervisor and the employees when they are absent. Update the plan each year based on staff performance, and ensure the unit training and development plan supports the advancement of interested employees.
- Take immediate action to correct any known deficiency in an employee's capability to perform currently assigned tasks.
- Encourage the development of subordinates, and foster a working environment in which employees are encouraged to learn new job skills.
- Assist employees to participate in external training opportunities requested by the employees. Such training must benefit the employees' professional career development. Ensure the training schedule does not have a significant negative effect on the employees' work. This training must also conform to current departmental guidelines for career related training.

#### **1-304 Individual Duties**

Each individual employee will do the following:

- As directed by the supervisor, attend training activities and learn the skills and acquire the knowledge necessary to meet the standards for satisfactorily completing job assignments.
- Attend a training class when scheduled to do so.
- Be responsible for evaluating their own ability to perform the essential job duties for each task they are asked to perform. If the individual does not feel properly trained or qualified to execute a specific job task, then that person must notify the supervisor.
- In the planning of activities for training and development, consider future promotional opportunities. Planning for training and development requires the employee to maintain a basic level of knowledge necessary to efficiently perform current job duties and also requires the employee to expand knowledge to include job duties for the next position on the individual's career path.
- Obtain prior approval from the supervisor to attend a training activity.
- Accurately report training expenditures, including filling out the "G" number column on the time reporting system. In addition, for district employees, turn in a copy of a completed Form OT-0300, "Training Request Form," to the district training officer, and for structure construction employees, turn in a copy to the Office of Structure Construction training officer.

### **1-305 Resources and Budgeting**

As a minimum, individual construction employees must devote 2 percent of regularly scheduled work time to “in-service occupational training.” In the 2 percent occupational training goal, do not include training other than that required in the occupational training plan. In addition to the resources for the 2 percent goal will be resources to sufficiently plan, prepare, and execute training instruction required to support the district’s training and development plan. On average, organized in-service training may be distributed so that the average employee will spend approximately 2 percent of the time as a trainee.

### **1-306 Subject Matter, Trainees, and Instructors**

The district construction administration must ensure the completeness and accuracy of the information disseminated through training and development activities. The Division of Construction, workforce development unit, will support, coordinate, and assist the district to the full extent of its abilities and resources.

Instructional subject matter for a course should be sufficiently broad to encompass all aspects of an operation or area of activity to which a person may be assigned. Occupational instruction should be offered close to the time when personnel will be required to use the job skills.

Personnel and consultant trainers who prepare and conduct training must be qualified in the subject matter and in the theory and techniques of training. Assistance for determining training expertise and training for trainers is available through the Division of Construction.

### **1-307 Just-in-Time Training**

Some contract special provisions provide for “just-in-time training,” which is joint training with industry and construction staff. This training should include all contractor and Caltrans staff who are directly involved in the construction operation. The objective of this training is to introduce new practices, improve workmanship, improve quality, and to provide current and timely training to the people actually performing the work.

### **1-308 Training Methods**

In-service training can be handled in various ways. Depending on the particular subject, different methods may be appropriate. In all instances, encourage instructors to use learning techniques that involve their students rather than techniques that simply use lecture. Whenever possible, students should be provided with the opportunity to perform a task shortly after receiving instruction and watching a demonstration. Classes for inspectors should be participatory and include “guided discussions” that encourage and promote an exchange of ideas and experiences among participants.

Caltrans construction uses the following basic training references:

- *Construction Manual*
- *Standard Specifications*
- *Standard Plans*
- District construction manuals
- *Highway Construction Checklists*

### **1-305 Resources and Budgeting**

### **1-306 Subject Matter, Trainees, and Instructors**

### **1-307 Just-in-Time Training**

### **1-308 Training Methods**

- *Manual of Traffic Controls for Construction and Maintenance Work Zones*
- *Highway Design Manual*
- *Traffic Manual*
- *Maintenance Manual*
- *Manual of Test*
- Other technical publications

The Division of Construction also has a number of training videos available for checkout. Many districts also have training videos available for staff viewing.

A highly effective method of industrial training and development is on-the-job training and mentoring by pairing less experienced staff with seasoned construction personnel. The supervisor must be careful to pair individuals with compatible personalities. The mentor should be knowledgeable and well versed in current Caltrans standards. The student can enhance the effectiveness of this training technique through the ability to respect the experience of the mentor, be genuinely interested, and become actively involved in the training process.

Occupational training must be accomplished as an organized effort followed by on-the-job experience. Certainly no complete substitute exists for experience, and often a well-regulated, on-the-job training program is an excellent method for the completion of instruction. It is just as certain that on-the-job experience is not necessarily synonymous with on-the-job training.

The districts must make every effort to coordinate their training activities with the other districts. For example, each of three districts may have only two or three people in need of training in a specific subject. It is preferable, therefore, to combine employees from the three districts to create one class. The districts and the Office of Structure Construction can also exchange qualified instructors.